

Teach basic doctrine? By Durk Meijer, March 31, 2016

How about Ethnic exegesis and local theologies? Should we not teach basic doctrine?

It is easy for us to think that we know what the people need whom we are serving. We may know a lot about them, but in reality we know very little about who they are and what they truly need. History is littered with examples of those forcing their ideas on people, regardless whether they are ruling the people or serving them. Even if we rule people, it is much better for them to voluntarily accept the ideas brought to them, rather than force them to act upon those ideas in a predetermined way. We should realize that we are not dictators, demanding people to follow our doctrines. Rather we are catalysts to help people learn themselves to engage with God and with Scripture. If we start with things people are open or interested and able to engage with, then the issues will be at a level that they can learn from, without our doing exegesis for them. As a catalyst we can help them to keep proper focus, using for example questions, so that their own worldview will not change the truth of the Scriptures. If we are positive and trusted catalysts, who have a good relationship with the people we serve, then they will more than likely ask us also for help when they need it. This is especially important once people start to deal with Scripture passages that relate to their traditional understanding of spiritual issues or local theologies. Again, how well this all will work depends on how deep our relationship is with them and if, from both sides, we truly are seeking God to lead us. This means that we need to be willing to make ourselves accountable to each other.